1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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INDUSTRIES AND IMPLEMENTS.

281 When a skin was brought in, it was hung on a sort of tripod, and with a chisel-like flesher of buffalo-leg bone the meat was removed. Then the hide was stretched on the ground to dry. When dried, the hair and thin coat of skin on the same side were cut off with the familiar implement of bent elk-horn, always provided, in recent times, with a metal blade. To make rawhide, nothing more was done. To make dressed skin, liver, grease, and brains, boiled and mixed in the proper proportion, were rubbed [177] or soaked into the skin and then removed with an ordinary scraper, now usually of sheet-iron or tin. Finally the skin was worked over with a rough stone or a bone. In preparing buffalo-skins for a tent, four steps were recognized: first, drying the skins; next, removing the hair; third, soaking them; and, last, scraping and working them over. Skins were softened by being drawn over a rope of buffalo-sinew.

281 When a woman had prepared enough buffalo-skins for a tent, she made
342 a feast and invited other women who were skilful at making tents. The most
476 expert of these fitted and tacked the skins together loosely, and the others sewed them fast. When a robe was to be embroidered, the woman who wanted to make it prepared food and invited other women to help her in her work. When the robe was finished, the man who was to receive it was called in, and it was given to him.

281 Caps of buffalo-skin were worn in winter. They were provided with flaps that were pulled down over the ears and held by a string fastened under the chin. Mittens of buffalo-skin were also used, tied together by a string which passed behind the neck. When the hunter was ready to shoot, he slipped his hands out of the mittens.

282 Simple flat unbraided ropes of rawhide were cut out of the skin in a long spiral. After having been cut, they were stretched between two sticks. In order to soften them, they were covered with manure, or tied to a horse that dragged them over the ground until they became pliable.

323 Pottery is declared to have been made formerly of clay mixed with crushed rock. Rawhide bags, drawn together at the top with a string, were
252 also used for cooking by means of hot rocks. The often described Plains method of cooking in holes in the ground lined with rawhide was also followed.

372 When fire was struck with flint and steel, dry mushrooms were sometimes used as tinder.

411 Bows were most frequently made of cherry-wood, but sometimes of ash. Ash was harder and more elastic, but more brittle. Sinew backing was

1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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sometimes put on the bow with glue made from boiled skin from the head of a buffalo. Sometimes the bow was without sinew backing and sometimes ornamented by being covered on the back with snake-skin. Bows are said to have been held either horizontally or vertically, according to individual habit. Arrows for war and hunting are said to have been alike.

Shields were made of the thickest part of buffalo-bull skin, which was laid into a hole in the ground and made hard by being scorched with hot rocks placed upon it. It was then provided with a cover of white buckskin fringed with feathers. A man who carried a shield in war sometimes had no other weapon.

It is declared that no tobacco was raised, and that none growing wild was gathered, but that it was obtained from other tribes and from the whites. This is contrary to the practice of the equally non-agricultural Blackfoot, who planted tobacco; but it would seem to accord with the lack of any information obtained from the Arapaho as to tobacco-raising.

DECORATIVE ART.

The present day decorative art of the Gros Ventre is not nearly as strongly developed as that of the Arapaho. There is much less bead-work made, and this hardly ever equals the better work of the Arapaho either in technical or artistic excellence. Quill-embroidery is also found less frequently than among the Arapaho. How far this greater poverty and inferiority of Gros Ventre decorative art are matters of some standing in time is not certain; but it seems probable that there was a difference between the two tribes in this respect, even when they first came into contact with the whites.

It is in accord with this difference that inquiry as to the symbolic or conventional significance of the decorative designs used by the Gros Ventre has been practically without result. While the failure of the Gros Ventre to render such interpretations is due perhaps in large measure to change of mode of life under the influence of civilization, yet it seems that in this respect too there must have been a temperamental difference between the Arapaho and Gros Ventre, even in earlier times; for the Arapaho preserve at least distinguished wrecks of their symbolism, ceremonies, and religious life, while among the Gros Ventre, who are in much less intimate contact with the Americans, these things have vanished, leaving often scarcely a trace, and rarely more than a memory.

Partly on account of comparative scarcity of material, and also by reason of greater artistic poverty, the decoration of the Gros Ventre does not present as many typical characteristics as that of the Arapaho, the Blackfeet, the

1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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526 Fig. 25 shows one side of a small ball painted yellow, on which is a rude
532 embroidery in red, yellow, and green quills, representing a bird. On the opposite side is a red quilled cross. The bird-embroidery recalls the quill-ornamentation of an Arapaho ghost-dance drumstick and hand implement, both of them with stuffed heads of painted skin; also the painting of a crow on an Arapaho ghost-dance ball.[1]

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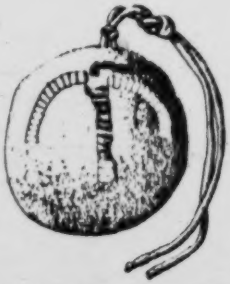

Fig. 25 (50-1731). Embroidered and Painted Ball. Diameter, 7 cm.

A game of throwing willow sticks on the ice, to see who could slide them farthest, was played by women. These sticks were sometimes tipped with buffalo-calves' horns. Young men, as well as women, sometimes threw horn-pointed sticks on the ice. It is said that women used long sticks, young men short sticks.

Children slid on the ice at a place they had made smooth. A boy and then a girl would slide alternately. When the whole party had slid one way, they would return, sliding in the opposite direction.

A toy made to slide on the ice consists of a bone to which two feathered sticks are attached at a diverging angle. It is called "tataxtsitcebya^{n}." The object is to bounce or slide the implement over the ice as far as possible. This type of object is found among a number of Plains tribes.

Fig. 26 (50-1788). Bull-roarer. Length, 56 cm.

493 Boys' sleds for coasting on hillsides were made of
526 several buffalo-ribs held together at each end by a long
857 thong winding in and out around the two halves of a split stick. A buffalo-tail was tied behind. These sleds were called "sö^{n}w^{n}haana^{n}." When a man presented such a sled to another man's boy, he received presents from the boy's parents. In early summer, when the grass was green, toboggans of rawhide were used on the hillsides. The front was held up and bent over, and the bottom soon became very smooth.

224 Slings were used by boys for killing birds and small animals. The entire
411 sling was made of skin. The thongs were passed through holes near the
857

[1] See Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History, Vol. XVIII, Part IV, p. 395, Fig. 151.

1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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ends of the main portion of the sling, and then looped on themselves through a slit near one end.

The bull-roarer and buzzer were both well known to the Gros Ventre, but seem to be only children's toys. They were both called nakaa^{n}ta^{n} ("making cold," a name given also to the thermometer), probably from the widespread Indian idea that the bull-roarer breeds wind. The buzzer was made of a foot-bone of a buffalo, with a sinew string on each side, by which it was twirled, and then drawn so as to hum. The Arapaho type of buzzer is the same. The Gros Ventre bull-roarer seems to differ from the Arapaho form. Fig. 20 shows one of two very similar models, both of wood. The small, well-marked head, the long taper and point, and the numerous small notches, mark a distinct form. The sinew string is of about the length of the stick handle.

WAR.

Men generally went to war on foot, carrying food and moccasins on their backs. While on the trip they did not boil meat, but roasted it. Scouts, called "wolves," were sent out ahead. When these returned, running in a zigzag course, and shouting, it was a sign that they had seen something. If they had seen lodges, they barked like wolves. While they came, the women in the party stood in a row and sang, having made a pile of buffalo-chips. The "wolves" stopped a short distance away, and the leader of the party went to them. They came with him back to the pile of buffalo-chips, where he stopped, and, facing the party, recounted coups. After this, one of the scouts came before them and reported what he had seen. Upon this, all rushed at the pile of buffalo-chips, and kicked them about. If the enemy were near, they would now take off their heavier clothing, such as their robes, and dress and paint for war.

On returning to their camp victorious, the party approached stealthily, and made a charge upon it, often shooting; and sometimes the people in the tents jumped up out of their sleep in the early morning, thinking they had been attacked. The man who had killed an enemy, the one who had struck him first (whether dead or alive), and the one who had taken his gun, were held in about the same esteem. After the return to camp, a dance was made. Drums were beaten; and the women, who were standing in a curved row, danced in a circle toward the men, who stood in a row, and back again. The women carried the new scalps on sticks. If an enemy were killed near the home camp, his feet and hands might be cut off and carried on sticks, like the scalps. During this dance the man who first

1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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from this part of the robe. At the end of each of these, a bunch of owl-feathers, or rather a piece of owl-skin, was attached. The dancers carried bows, to each end of which seven crow-feathers were tied. Down was fastened to the bowstring at several places. At the handle of the bow a strip of bear-skin, owl-feathers, and some sage were fastened with a buck-skin thong. Four arrows accompanied each bow. One had a metal point, which subsequently was made more effective by medicine. The three other arrows were blunt, or had wooden points that had been chewed soft so as to be harmless.

The pledger, and three other men called "brothers" (hinähäbyiitou), who sat apart from the other dancers in the lodge and acted somewhat differently on certain occasions, had bows that were unornamented, except for the down on the string. These four men wore their robes turned so that the hair was outside, whereas the other dancers wore the dressed side out.

All the dancers were painted entirely red. Their hair was daubed with white paint. They stopped the left ear with a mushroom, such as was used for tinder, and put paint (apparently white) over the ear and the entire left side of the face.

Four young men who would be good workers were selected to be the assistants or servants (atsaan) of this company. They brought wood and water, and performed other services.

The lodge for this dance is described as having been made of travois or tent poles about which tent-skins were drawn. It was open to the east. There was a fire about in the centre. Facing the opening of the lodge was a small partial enclosure or screen constructed on dog-travois. In this were the pledger and his three companions, the "brothers." The dancers are said to have occupied the northern half of the wall in the dancing-lodge; the "grandfathers," behind whom sat the dancers' wives, the southern half. As among the Arapaho, the dancers were divided into two sections; the tall men toward the rear and the short men toward the front, of the lodge. These two divisions competed against each other in the races to follow. The dancers' bows were stood up in the ground in a row just beyond the fire.

During the four days of the dance, the dancers, every morning before sunrise, went to their "grandfathers" to be painted. Apparently they went to their "grandfathers'" tents, and not to the dancing-lodge, for this purpose. The dancers' wives went with them. They were naked, and were painted too. No one but the "grandfather" looked at them. Before being painted, the dancers made incense of sage-leaves on burning charcoal. They also rubbed their bodies with fragrant fir or balsam leaves

Crushed and mixed with fat.

1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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the old man who had directed the ceremony stood by him. Until this time, the dancers' bows, which were to play so prominent a part in the dance of the next four days, had been unstrung. Each of the dancers carried a pair of moccasins in his belt, or perhaps some other property. The pledger now came up to have his bow stretched. The old man in charge of the dance, receiving the bow from him, rested it on the back of the crouching old man. Four times he bent it, and the fourth time slipped the string into its notch. Then he untied the three arrows from the bow and gave them to the young man, who put his moccasins or other gift under the croucher's robe. Another and another dancer came up with his bow, until all their bows had been strung on the back of the old man, and his robe swelled out from the accumulating gifts.

While the bows were being strung, the people took down the dancing-lodge, which, by the time of the return of the dancers to the centre of the camp-circle, was completely gone. The dancers now stood in a circle while the old man in charge of the dance, or, according to another account, two of the "grandfathers," sang for them. The long stick with rattling hoofs was shaken, and the young men danced for four songs. At the end of each song, they aimed an arrow at the sky, making a motion of shooting, and crying "Yaa!" At the end of the fourth song, all shot as high up as they could. As the arrows fell back they did not try to avoid them, and, it is said, were never hit. By this time the people had watered their horses and done whatever outdoor work was necessary, and retired to their tents, for, immediately after shooting into the air, the dancers rushed in all directions; and from this moment they had full liberty about the camp, except indoors, for four days. Any one seen outside of a tent was shot with the soft blunt arrows. He was pursued amid shots and blowing of whistles. If a man was caught, he was made to sit down, and all the dancers, seeing what was happening, gathered. If he rode, he was pursued on horseback until he was overtaken, whereupon he would say, "Do not wait: I will not give you a dance," meaning "Wait: I will give you a dance." Then they stood about him, and he sang and they danced. At the end of his song, every one shouted "Yaa!" and kicked him until he was knocked over. Perhaps he would say, "Kick me hard." Then they would barely touch him. Sometimes he said, "Now you must kill me." If, however, he said, "Do not hurt me," he would be hurt severely. Scarcely any one went out during these four days, except, of course, the dancers' "grandfathers," who were exempt from annoyance.

The pointed arrow tied to each bow, and ordinarily not loosened, was prayed over for each young man by his "grandfather;" and a piece of root esteemed as exceedingly powerful, and called tjitjäätsä" (Arapaho, tee-

1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

tcäätcei), was attached to the shaft just behind the point. This root is the well-known poisonous wild parsnip. The arrow-point seems to have been painted blue. Even a slight scratch with this arrow was, on account of the power of the medicine, supposed to cause fits and death. The theory was, that if any one became angry under the unbridled annoyances of the crazy-dancers, and attempted to resist, he would be shot with this arrow. It is, of course, extremely unlikely that this ever actually occurred, or, if it did, the offender was, as among the Arapaho, no doubt immediately cured by the dancers from his imaginary convulsions or paralysis. If buffalo were driven among the tents of the camp-

Fig. 34.

Fig. 35.

Fig. 34 (50-1884 b). Crazy-dance Regalia. Length, 29 cm.
Fig. 35 (50-1884 c). Crazy-dance Regalia. Length, 23 cm.

circle, they were shot with these arrows, and are believed to have been killed, even if only very slightly wounded. Dogs were also killed in this way.

After four days of this playing, the ceremony ended. At its conclusion the bows were given away to boys who were relatives of the dancers; but the other regalia were kept, as the dance was not infrequently repeated.

1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

796 293 for the ends of the streamers of this robe have been preserved in a few sets of these regalia. The head-band, leglets, anklets, and feather and fur attachments of the bow, also exist in two or more sets in the Museum. They agree entirely, so that only the set shown in Figs. 34, 35, 36, and 37, need be described. This set lacks only the whistle and whistle necklace, which have been supplied from another set (see Plate XII).

[411] The bow (see Plate XII) is three feet long, an inch wide, nearly rectangular in cross-section, unbacked, and slightly reddened. At each end is tied a piece of skin slit into seven fringes, to the end of each of which is wrapped a crow-wing feather. At the middle of the bow is tied a strip of bear-skin a foot long and an inch or less wide. With this are six owl-feathers, — all to be held to the bow, it will be remembered, together with some sage, by a thong. The pieces of owl-skin for the streamers on the robe (Fig. 34) need no comment. The anklets of badger-skin are (Fig. 35) a foot long, an inch or more wide, tied together by two thongs, and near one end have four small hoofs attached. The head, leg, and neck bands differ from one another only in length and in attachments. They consist of a strip of skin a quarter of an inch wide, completely wrapped with yellow porcupine-quills. In four places are areas extending about half an inch, that are covered with dark-brown fibres. Attached to the head-band (Fig. 36) is part of a small owl-skin, including one of the mandibles. The whistle on the neck-band (Plate XII) is made of the wing-bone of an eagle or similar bird, and appears to be unornamented. It has been broken. At one end of the leg-bands (Fig. 37) are four small crow-feathers, attached by red-painted thongs.

The Kit-Fox Dance.

796 The kit-fox dance, the next in order after the crazy-dance, was called nouha"wu; and the dancers, nouhanen ("kit-fox men"). In its general course this ceremony was exactly analogous to the first part of the crazy-dance. For four nights, the dancers' wives went out with their "grandfathers" to receive medicine, and for four days, the dancers themselves danced in the lodge erected in the centre of the camp-circle. On the fourth day of the ceremony, or "after four days," as the Indians say, the dancers went to the tent of a prominent chief and danced at his door, which was [431] equivalent to asking him for gifts. The chief would give them horses and other property. Three other chiefs were accorded the same distinction. The camp thereupon broke, and the dancers, going ahead, put the property which they had received down on the ground in a row. The camp coming up, the brave men of the tribe made a charge on these things, as if they were

1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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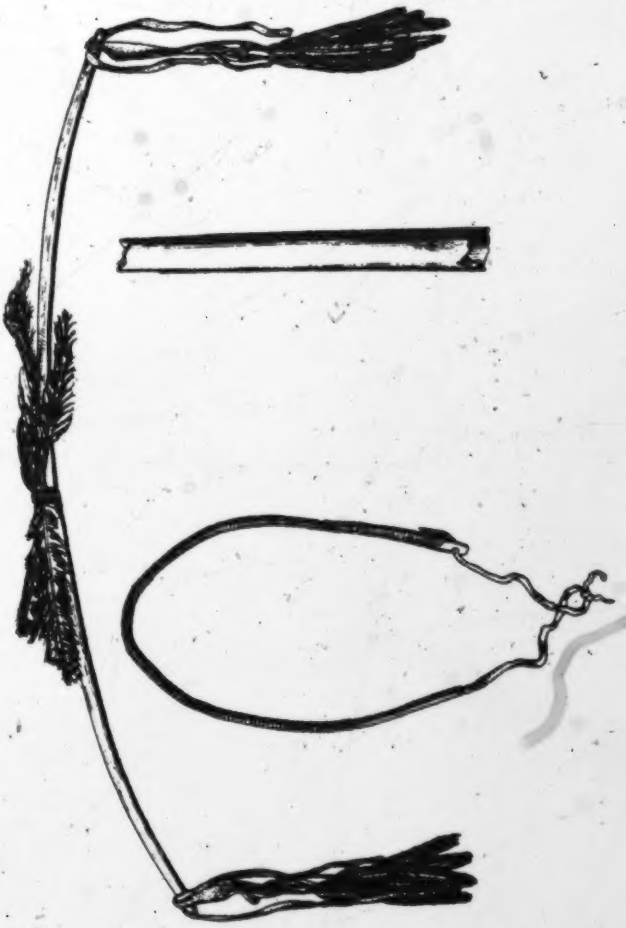
Vol. I, Plate XII.



Crazy-Dance Bow and Paraphernalia.

Anthrop. Pap. A. M. N. H.

[End Plate 5]

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

CHAPTER IV

ECONOMIC ASPECTS

Labor

In the production of economic goods the man supplied the great bulk of raw materials by means of hunting, doing relatively little collecting and processing. He was responsible, however, for the supply and care of the major means of production, the horse. The chief objects manufactured by him were bows, arrows, clubs, shields, and ceremonial equipment.[1] The woman, on the other hand, supplied only a small part of the raw materials, through collecting, but did most of the processing of raw materials and manufacturing.

Cooperation within the household was necessary for production, and the household was practically a self-sufficient unit with relatively little reliance on the cooperative work of others. In actuality there was quite a bit of mutual help, especially among relatives. There was, of course, a certain amount of dependence of the man on his fellows in hunting in the sense that men usually hunted buffalo in groups and, in view of the common welfare, an individual was restrained from selfishly hunting alone and scattering the herd on which his fellows were depending. Nevertheless the operation was a collective rather than a truly cooperative one because, once the chase started, each man was on his own and had the right of disposal over whatever game he killed. It was stated that in any given run the most a man could kill would be seven or eight buffalo and that almost inevitably some would get none. No one went home empty-handed, however, for the more fortunate

[1] Maximilian noted in 1833 that men make only arms and smoking equipment (p. 103), and that among the Gros Ventres were many war clubs "made of the long end of an elk's horn" and "daggers" of jaws and teeth of a bear (p. 75). For other details of materials and manufacture, see Kroeber, 1908, pp. 150–51. For illustration of a shield, see photograph, courtesy of Richard Pohrt, pl. 3.

3: Cooper E-5 (1938-1940) 1957
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

dried and seasoned, then pulverized, and used in a liquid. It was also used mixed with other things.

The Pipe keepers, and co-keepers, ex-keepers and ex-co-keepers, were immune and could handle it. But if others touched the plant or powder they would be seized at once with fits which only an actual or retired keeper or co-keeper could cure by working on him and blowing some of the powder on him. Some Gros Ventres, however, such as old Deafie, did not believe that wild parsley caused fits, but many cases are reported. One man, for instance, in recent times carried some in his hands to a dance, and during the dance got a fit and it took one of the ex-co-keepers to bring him out of it. Another man used wild parsley as a medicine in doctoring. Each participant in the Crazy Lodge used it. But originally its use was confined to Pipe keepers and co-keepers (see p. 52).

If one were scratched with an arrow that had been dipped in wild parsley infusion he would suffer spasms, fits and acute agony and would not live till morning. Such a poisoned arrow was tied by each Crazy Lodge dancer to his bow, apparently as a silent threat to enforce obedience and respect by the people during the lodge rites, but was thrown away after the dance was over.* These poisoned arrows were not used at any other time than the Crazy Lodge; never for instance, in Gros Ventre wars or raids on enemies.

Seasonal Rites

The three annual seasonal rites were in the olden days the major ceremonial events in Gros Ventre life according to The Boy, Thick and older informants. No vow was necessary to hold them. They were never omitted. They had to be performed. The seasonal rites have long since been given up. They were last carried out sometime in the late 1860's or early 1870's, while The Boy's father, Lame Bull, was keeper.

The three seasonal rites were held in the spring, fall and winter respectively. About April the various Gros Ventre bands, which

*Cf. Kroeber, 1908, pp. 207-08 regarding poisoned arrow.